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DE RUEHOT #0808/01 1681355

ZNY CCCCC ZZH

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FM AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8036

INFO RUCNCCAN/ALL CANADIAN POSTS COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

RUEHXP/ALL NATO POST COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

RHFJUSC/BUREAU OF CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION WASHDC

RHMFISS/CDR USCENTCOM

RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC

RHEFHLC/DEPT OF HOMELAND SECURITY IA WASHINGTON DC

RHMCSUU/FBI WASHINGTON DC

RHEFHLC/HOMELAND SECURITY CENTER WASHINGTON DC

RHMFISS/HQ USNORTHCOM

RUEKJCS/Joint STAFF WASHDC

RUEKJCS/OSD WASHDC

RHEHNSC/WHITE HOUSE NSC WASHINGTON DC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 07 OTTAWA 000808

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/16/2018

TAGS: PTER PGOV PREL SOCI CA

SUBJECT: CANADA CONFRONTS RADICALIZATION ABROAD AND AT HOME

REF: A. OTTAWA 774

1B. OTTAWA 645

1C. 07 TORONTO 479

1D. TORONTO 114

Classified By: PolMinCouns Scott Bellard reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) Summary and comment: Canada has long struggled with how to avoid or reduce radicalization in one of the most diverse societies in the world, while also supporting global efforts to counter extremism. Its still evolving strategy involves multiple agencies working on various levels of foreign assistance, societal engineering, and law enforcement. Key factors in radicalization in Canada include cultural isolation mixed with active proselytizing. Officials are keen to avoid an "us vs. them" approach, and have sought instead to empower the Muslim community to police its own, while creating a better understanding and image of public security institutions. At the same time, Canada has showed the determination directly to confront and curtail the activities of those whose radicalization has reached a certain threshold, as in the 2006 arrests of the "Toronto 18" (now 11) alleged terrorists.

12. (C) The jury is still out on whether Canada's escape so far from any terrorist attacks or a serious problem with radicalization of Muslim communities is due to pro-active and concerted efforts by Canadian agencies and NGOs, or despite them. The relative newness of its non-European immigrant community -- which really began to grow in earnest only in the late 1970s and to shift toward more South Asians and Middle East populations even later -- may be a factor; their children may be much more vulnerable to radicalization than the hard-working first generation parents, especially if the children do not "buy into" a Canadian identify. One saving grace is that many mosques in Canada tend to be multi-national in membership, potentially counteracting a certain ghetto-ization increasingly visible in Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver. One way or another, Canada will never have the luxury of relaxing its counter-radicalization efforts abroad or at home, at least in the foreseeable future. Canadian officials have made clear that they continue to welcome continued collaboration with U.S. and other like-minded counterparts. End Summary and Comment.

AN EVOLVING COUNTER-RADICALIZATION STRATEGY

13. (SBU) With declining birth rates, Canada has of necessity

long welcomed immigrants to sustain its still impressive economic growth. Canada receives over 200,000 immigrants and refugees each year (as well as another 200,000 foreign students and workers annually, many of whom eventually become landed immigrants), with a marked shift in recent years away from traditional European immigrants in favor of Asians and Middle Easterners (refs a and b). Approximately 17% of current Canadian citizens were born outside the country, second only to Australia. Immigrants tend to concentrate in large populations centers, with 46% of the population in Toronto, 37% in Vancouver, and 28% in Montreal first generation immigrants. Approximately 15% of arriving immigrants are Muslim, and of the top ten source countries two -- Pakistan and Iran -- are predominately Muslim.

¶4. (C) Even before 9/11, the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) was quietly monitoring the threat of the violent radicalization of Canadian citizens, which included several cases in western Canada of Anglo-Saxon converts to Islam and Muslim-born citizens in large population centers. According to Jean Louis Tiernan, a Privy Council Office (PCO) Policy Analyst who covers radicalization, official interest government-wide further surged after the London bombings in 2005, with public interest and support for counter-radicalization solidifying after the arrest of the "Toronto 18" alleged terrorists in 2006. (Only 11 of the 18 still face charges, with the first trial now underway.)

¶5. (C) CSIS' 2007 annual report stated that its main foci remain "terrorism inspired by the ideology of Al Qaeda and the issue of radicalization of citizens or residents."

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According to a respected security specialist, "the radicalization issue is really on the top of the government's security agenda these days." However, Tiernan commented that the Department of Public Safety (PS) has had at best limited success in developing a "whole-of-government" approach to counter-radicalization. (Note: Public Safety Canada has most of the same responsibilities as the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, but also runs CSIS, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the corrections system, and parole board, as well as the Canada Border Services Agency. End note) A CSIS officer insisted that only PS could lead all the relevant government agencies, especially given the "narrow" mandates of CSIS and the RCMP, but that PS "needs to do more."

¶6. (C) Canada's evolving strategy includes four concentric circles of engagement. First are efforts by the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) to engage Muslim societies abroad in order to reduce radicalization in these societies -- before they get to Canada -- while also trying to improve the image of Canada. Second are programs to improve the lives of immigrants in Canada to avert the pull of radicalization, which the Department of Canadian Heritage ("Heritage Canada") -- supported by the Department of Citizenship and Immigration (CIC), along with initiatives from NGOs and private organizations -- oversees. Third are programs by public security agencies to engage with communities of concern, both to improve the flow of information to and from these communities, and to enhance the public image of security organizations. These include programs by CSIS, PS, RCMP, and local police. Fourth is the direct targeting of leaders and mosques attempting to radicalize others, which falls under the mandate of CSIS and/or the RCMP, acting on tips from local law enforcement.

ENGAGING MUSLIM COMMUNITIES ABROAD

¶7. (C) Given its high levels of immigration and travelers from countries of concern, Canada strongly believes that countering radicalization abroad is in its national security interest, and is increasing its investments in stemming the advance of extremism in select countries. Within DFAIT,

these anti-radicalization efforts abroad fall under the purview of both the Counter-Terrorism Section of the International Crime and Terrorism Division and the Muslim Communities Working Group in the Bureau of Asia South and the Pacific. The Counter-Terrorism Section cooperates with Canada's partners abroad on security issues, including outreach and public diplomacy programs focused on countering radicalization. It provides funding for and/or organization of outreach programs in the Middle East to engage with Muslims and to inform them about Canadian society and multiculturalism. Canadian officials admit that these programs remain limited in scope and number, however, as the majority of counter-terrorism funds instead necessarily underwrite the investigative and legislative needs of partner countries. DFAIT's efforts concentrate primarily in Afghanistan and Pakistan, with some work in Malaysia and Indonesia.

¶8. (C) DFAIT also established an ad hoc "Muslim Communities Working Group" in 2005 in response to a Canadian Senate recommendation, and formalized it as an operational unit in 2007, with an Advisory Group of senior officials meeting on a quarterly basis. It takes a pro-active -- albeit still experimental -- approach, bringing together officers from across DFAIT, and acting as a clearinghouse and focal point for all issues related to the Muslim world. Its mandate now includes building DFAIT's policy capacity on Muslim issues, providing strategic advice on relations with the Muslim world, and creating a policy framework for DFAIT's approach to Muslim issues. The unit works to ensure that all policies related to the Muslim world take into account efforts to fight radicalization and extremism.

¶9. (SBU) On November 13-14, 2007, the Muslim Communities unit teamed with the United Kingdom's Foreign and Commonwealth Office's "Engaging with the Islamic World Bureau" to host an Experts' Meeting on "Engaging Muslim Communities Abroad." Australia, Denmark, France, Finland, Germany, the

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Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, and the U.S. sent representatives. According to Canadian officials, a clear divide became evident in this forum between the "Anglo-sphere plus" (U.S., UK, Canada, Australia, and the Netherlands) -- who supported direct engagement to help societies counter radicalization -- and all others, who expressed extreme reticence about any kind of direct engagement with any particular communities to reduce extremism.

¶10. (SBU) While there was wide variance in how the different countries approached the issue, there was also general acknowledgment among participants that the conference was a positive effort and yielded several worthwhile conclusions. First, participants expressed a need to "take back the airwaves" to prevent radicals and extremists from controlling the dialogue. Second, they saw the key to success as engaging local voices and interlocutors, rather than establishing direct national public diplomacy programs, while still supporting some national efforts to counter radicalization abroad in countries such as Malaysia and Indonesia that welcome outside help. Third, they expressed caution that efforts to counter radicalization can be undercut if included under conventional law enforcement and counter-terrorism programs. Finally, there must be close coordination between domestic efforts and programs abroad, as there is a natural synergy worthy of encouragement. Participants cited areas for future collaboration, including:

- further development of the network of contacts;
- better coordination among embassies in key countries; and,
- sharing best practices, successful programs, and effective information products and research.

SHAPING A MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY

¶11. (SBU) In 1971, Canada became the first country to adopt an official "Multiculturalism Policy," which promotes multiculturalism as a "fundamental characteristic of the Canadian heritage and identity." In order more effectively to carry out this policy, the government established a Multiculturalism and Human Rights Division in Heritage Canada, under the working assumption that immigrants who are fully integrated -- not "assimilated," a distinction Canadians are quick to make from the U.S. model -- into a society that treats them with fairness and dignity will be better citizens. The Division encourages Canadians to expand their understanding of diversity, and tries to ensure that public institutions are responsive to -- and representative of -- Canada's diverse population.

¶12. (SBU) In order to give teeth to this policy, the Canadian Parliament in 1985 passed a Multicultural Act, which directs the federal government, inter alia, to "promote policies, programs, and practices that enhance the ability of individuals and communities of all origins to contribute to the continuing evolution of Canada." Each government agency must submit annual reports detailing its compliance with the act. Heritage Canada's Multicultural and Human Rights Qact. Heritage Canada's Multicultural and Human Rights Division also runs education campaigns, holds public events, and engages with various groups to discuss the importance of diversity and multiculturalism. CIC has a parallel mandate to ensure that "diversity is a strength, not a threat," and spends as much as 50% of its budget each year (about half a billion U.S. dollars) on programs to help immigrants better integrate into Canadian society.

¶13. (C) In 2006, however, the government made an explicit addition to Heritage Canada's mandate: "countering radicalization that could lead to violence." According to officials, the Multiculturalism and Human Rights Division is working to incorporate this goal into its programs. One official noted a further complexity in that CIC is generally responsible for immigrants in their first three years after arrival in Canada, while Heritage Canada deals with the remainder of their lives in Canada.

NGOs PITCH IN

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¶14. (SBU) Canadian NGOs are separately active in organizing counter-radicalization programs and events. Each year, a Toronto-based NGO focused on education and advocacy (the IHYA Foundation) organizes a large convention and retreat for Islamic youth on "Reviving the Islamic Spirit." In December 2007, approximately 15,000 people attended its fifth annual convention, and 500 students participated in a "knowledge retreat" (ref c). The theme of the event was "Family Matters: The Basis of Civil Society." In November 2005, the Circle of Canadians -- an organization dedicated to bringing together various groups in Canada to emphasize common values -- convened a forum on "Understanding Islam: Engaging Canadian Youth To Fight Extremism." Members of a wide variety of ethnic groups attended, and Canadian officials -- including the mayor of Ottawa, RCMP officers, and Public Safety Canada representatives -- spoke to the audience about fighting youth extremism.

¶15. (SBU) Separately, the Association of Progressive Muslims produced two educational films -- "No Distance Between Us" and "Fragile Mosaic" -- that examined the "experiences and sentiments of Canadian Muslims" after 9/11. School districts and police departments have used these films as educational tools. On June 30, the Association will present its annual award to Ambassador Wilkins; previous recipients have included the Canadian Justice System, the Canadian Parliamentary Democratic System of Government, the late Prime

Minister Pierre Trudeau, and UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Louise Arbour.

COUNTERING RADICALIZATION THROUGH ENGAGEMENT

¶116. (C) When the positive inducements of a prosperous and tolerant society nonetheless fail to deter radicalization, however, public security institutions step in. PS Canada, CSIS, and the RCMP have front-line responsibilities for countering terrorism, and each has programs and policies dealing with radicalization. According to one CSIS official, Canadian citizens are reluctant to support direct programs targeting Muslims out of concern of a danger of getting involved too early in the evolution of a threat. Canadian public security agencies tend instead to undertake a more general engagement in order to increase the flow of information on radicalization by putting public security officials in communities of concern in a positive forum, and to de-mystify public security decisions and policies so that they do not counterproductively stoke the fires of radicalism.

¶117. (C) PS Canada works to counter radicalization within Canada by educating citizens on government security programs, as well as by engaging with various ethnic and religious groups to establish a positive relationship with them and better understand their concerns. Its Citizen Engagement Department takes the lead, largely through meetings of the "Cross-Cultural Roundtable on Security," which has a mandate to engage Canadians in an ongoing dialogue on national security issues. The roundtable includes representatives of Qsecurity issues. The roundtable includes representatives of the RCMP, PS Canada, DFAIT, Heritage Canada, and CIC, as well as fifteen private members from different ethnic, cultural, and religious groups, such as an urban planner born in Turkey, a public relations representative of Indian descent, and a Chinese-Canadian security consultant. It meets approximately three times per year and provides a forum for government officials and members of the public to discuss government security programs and other security-related issues, including radicalization. The meetings also allow the government to explain its policies and the reasoning behind them to community leaders, in the hope that they will in turn explain these policies to other community members. Canadian policy seeks to avoid pushing all Muslims defensively into the extremist camp and creating an "us vs. them" divide.

¶118. (C) Member of Parliament Marcel Lussier (Bloc Quebecois, from south of Quebec) described how the approach of moderates reining in the radicals is succeeding, at least in his "riding," which includes 3,000 Muslims among 12,000

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immigrants. He described a march for Lebanon during the Israeli incursion, at which a "radical" displayed a Hamas flag. Moderate marchers told the radicals to put the flag away, as they did not want the rally in support of Lebanon to be tainted by the extremism of Hamas. He estimated that no more than 1 pct of Muslims in Canada were genuinely vulnerable to extremism. He warned, though, that when the Muslim community senses Islamophobia -- such as during controversies over wearing head scarves -- the moderates and extremists are more likely to unite.

¶119. (C) The RCMP separately conducts its own domestic anti-radicalization efforts, including the "National Security Outreach Program" of its National Security Criminal Investigations Department, operating through a Community Advisory Committee that brings together Canadian Muslims from a variety of backgrounds. An early effort was to train RCMP officers from across the country on key issues of cultural sensitivity, such as the religion of Islam, women and Islam (including the hijab), and the make-up of Canada's Muslim community. The training included tips on how to be

culturally sensitive when dealing with Canadian Muslims. According to RCMP officials, the program has been especially effective by bringing RCMP officers into direct contact with law-abiding Muslims under positive circumstances, as well as by helping members of the Muslim community learn more about the challenges RCMP officers face.

¶20. (C) The RCMP also runs a "National Security Youth Outreach" program, which began in late 1995 but was stepped up after the June 2006 "Toronto 18" arrests highlighted the problem of youthful terrorists in Canada. (Note: the first trial of the remaining 11 who face charges from the 2006 arrests recently began in Toronto - ref d. End note) The program focuses on educating youth on national security issues and helping prevent youth radicalization that could lead to violence. It includes discussions on alternative avenues for expression other than violence, visits to schools and classrooms to discuss security issues, and symposiums on the prevention of radicalization. RCMP offices throughout the country now have their own youth outreach programs, such as in British Columbia, where RCMP officers hold meetings with Muslim parents on signs of youth radicalization.

¶21. (C) Local police forces have separately developed community programs aimed at countering radicalization. Ottawa Police Sergeant Isabelle Anderson, an Afro-Canadian who grew up under apartheid in Rhodesia, is nationally known in law enforcement circles for the program she manages on race and diversity. A Community Police Action Committee, co-chaired by the Deputy Chief of Operations, manages conflict between the police and citizens organizations and builds relationships with the community. Anderson described it as a "tremendous" source of information, adding that there are many people in the Muslim community who do not like how their community is perceived by Canadians. If they have a pre-existing relationship with public security officials, they are more likely to be willing to help "ferret out" extremists, she commented. She said that she had a "good and consistent" relationship with the local mosque, which she visits frequently, and in the aftermath of the Toronto 18 arrests held a meeting at City Hall with religious and community leaders. Anderson commented that, based on her 2 1/2 years working on this issue, she had concluded that we should not "over-complicate" it. Treating groups of concern with respect -- not singling groups out unfairly -- and ensuring a good flow of information goes a long way toward this end, she emphasized.

¶22. (C) Many Canadian programs do not even mention "Islam" or "Muslim" specifically, but rather rely on the language of "diversity" and "inclusion." Officials from DFAIT's Muslim Communities Working Group Operational Unit separately acknowledged it did focus exclusively on Muslims, but worked with Muslims on a diverse range of issues -- not just anti-radicalization -- to ensure that Muslims do not feel that the government is reaching out to them only because it is afraid of them.

DIRECT TARGETING OF RADICAL LEADERS

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¶23. (C) Canadian public security institutions are nonetheless fully prepared to step in and directly confront leaders and organizations engaged in radicalization. CSIS, RCMP, and local police have all, at different times, gone to mosques and let the Iman or other leaders know they were crossing the line. A CSIS official said that the legal framework for such confrontation, however, remains sketchy. An individual could be prosecuted for hate speech if preaching includes specific references against a certain group, such as Jews or homosexuals (the latter he said is actually the easiest to pin them on), but general jihadist rhetoric is difficult to build a legal case against. So far, there have indeed been

no persecutions under existing hate crimes legislation. Ottawa Police Sgt. Anderson separately noted that local Muslims who notice Canadian officials focusing on particular mosques will tend to "put pressure" on religious leaders to tone down their rhetoric.

VIEWS FROM THE CANADIAN MUSLIM COMMUNITY

¶24. (C) Canada's Muslim community is divided on whether the government should focus on Muslims. According to Canadian Islamic Congress President Mohammed Elmasry (an Imam and outspoken critic of the government of Prime Minister Stephen Harper), the Conservative Party ignores Canada's Muslim population (which tends to vote for the Liberals) and the current government should actually place more emphasis on useful programs for Muslims, such as re-training Muslim immigrants, funding university programs on Islam, and conducting research on issues such as the impact of 9/11 on Canadian views of Muslims. He remarked that, since 9/11, the Muslim community had become a "special case" and should receive more consideration than other groups.

¶25. (C) Conversely, Muslim Canadian Congress Senior Vice President and Cross-Cultural Roundtable on Security participant Salma Siddiqui told poloff that she was strongly opposed to what she felt was the targeting of Muslims by the government. Siddiqui expressed the view that, by focusing on Muslims, the government was reinforcing Muslims' views that society marginalizes them. She acknowledged that Canada's Muslim community is divided on this and many other issues. She also noted that members of Elmasry's Canadian Islamic Congress -- which she described as "radical" and "Saudi-funded" -- often disagreed with the Muslim Canadian Congress, which she called a "moderate" Muslim organization.

TOO MANY PIECES TO THE MOSAIC?

¶26. (C) A common theme in conversations with Canadian officials on anti-radicalization programs was the uniquely "Canadian approach" they were taking -- referring to Canada's focus on diversity and its openness to ethnic and religious groups. Several described this approach by using the analogy of the United States as a "melting pot" and Canada as a "mosaic." In the melting pot, everyone becomes "American" and loses an individual identity, some explained, while in a mosaic, individuals retain their identities but come together to create one beautiful picture -- a uniquely "Canadian" ability.

¶27. (C) While Canadian officials widely touted this model of diversity as helping to welcome immigrants and thus counter radicalization, many also remarked that there was a sense within the government that Canada may have gone too far in encouraging individualism versus integration. One Canadian Heritage official noted that Secretary of State for Multiculturalism and Canadian Identity and Conservative Member of Parliament Jason Kenney had changed part of Heritage Canada's focus from "celebrating the individual" to "integrative multiculturalism" -- an attempt to emphasize "integration" while couching it in terms of the more acceptable concept of "multiculturalism." The official remarked that this was in concert with Canada's shift following 9/11 toward a more "American" view that integration, rather than individualism, may create a greater

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feeling of inclusion, thus discouraging extremism. The official also noted that Secretary Kenney had added the term "Canadian Identity" to his title, which many officials saw as a telling sign of Canada's new emphasis on integrating residents from all backgrounds under one Canadian identity. Other government representatives have commented that they felt people around the world understood what it meant to be

"American," but that Canada lacked a similar sense of identity, making it more difficult to create a feeling of one unified society in Canada -- and hence creating greater susceptibility to radicalization.

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